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Synopses of Important Articles.

JESUS THE DEMAGOGUE. By WALTER WALSH, in *Contemporary Review* for March 1886.

The ideal Christ has changed with changing times. A theological age shaped for itself a theological Christ and a sociological age is shaping for itself a sociological Christ. The churches have come under the spell of the new ideas, but during the absence of an ideal Christ that shall combine the historical elements of the gospels with all that is good and true in modern sociology, impatient revolutionaries have constructed a new Jesus — Jesus the Demagogue. This new phase of the ideal Christ is a reversion to a lower type. So far as the socialistic movement at all holds to Christianity it represents a yearning for temporal leadership rather than for spiritual kingship. It has scant appreciation for Jesus as a reformer of moral habits or a teacher of spiritual qualities. He is represented as an agitator for higher wages and shorter hours; the first century herald of a socialistic era — a sort of sublimated Keir Hardie.

In order to substantiate this view, new and ingenious turns are given the sacred narrative, the principle of interpretation being to place the political effect in the place of the moral cause. As a result Jesus the spiritual regenerator becomes Jesus the political propagandist. For example, by the socialist hermeneutics the two exceptional cases of feeding the multitudes are broadened into the doctrine that Jesus cared more for bodies than for souls, and the refusal of Jesus to be made king is said to have been due to the fact that he was a republican. The republican theory is reinforced by an ingenious socialistic turn given to his occasional freedom with certain swine and asses, and his scant respect for the money changers. These facts are made to show that Jesus was a communist. Neglecting facts that make against this view, the story of Dives and Lazarus is used to prove that Jesus cared more for property than for character.

But the authority of the early Christians can be claimed for state socialism only by playing havoc with the facts of apostolic religion. The primitive Christian bore no enmity to government. Reforms were to be brought about by spiritual regenerations.

Writers on the new socialism in claiming the support of Jesus have led us into a shallower view of Christ rather than into a deeper. The formulated programme becomes increasingly secular. The universal summons of Jesus to service and self renunciation is forged into a new missile to hurl at the

wealthier classes and degraded into an argument for the universal right to creature comforts.

Confronted with this materialistic theory, we begin to understand our debt to Matthew Arnold for his exposition of the *inwardness* of Jesus. For the Jesus of the gospels was no such leader as the socialist portrays. The way of the cross is foolishness to those who seek after political wisdom and demand a revolutionary sign. The inwardness of the method of Jesus is ludicrously slow and unbusiness-like to the revolutionist and political millennialist. Believers in the gospel of Rousseau have merely to revise the social contract, and lo! the millennium is at the door; while the gospel of Jesus requires the regeneration of the human spirit as the tremendous preliminary to successful revision. It would be a great gain if materialistic state socialists, on the one hand, and enthusiastic humanitarian Christians, on the other, could be induced to proclaim less loudly that "Socialism is Christianity." The sanction of Jesus for any just reform can be claimed without fastening him down to theories of which he never heard, and making him stand sponsor for political ideas he might repudiate. The way of the cross is the only way to social emancipation. Jesus the Demagogue can profit nothing; but Jesus the Son of Man.

We sympathize heartily with the criticisms contained in this striking paper. There is altogether too strong a tendency toward making Jesus nothing more than a reformer of the ills of today's society. Jesus did indeed inaugurate a new social order, but he began by showing men how they must become sons of God and therefore brothers. There is vast help in the gospels for the man who is endeavoring to help the oppressed, but the philanthropist should never imagine that the chief element in Christianity is the establishment of lodging-houses and the obtaining of low fares on street cars. The key-word of the social teachings of Jesus is not amelioration but regeneration.

S. M.

JESUS UND DAS ALTE TESTAMENT, EIN ZWEITES ERNSTES WORT AN DIE EVANGELISCHEN CHRISTEN. VON PROFESSOR LIC. J. MEINHOLD. Cf. *Christliche Welt*, Leipzig, 1896, No. 2.

In order to discern clearly science is often compelled to separate and isolate that which in life is found united. This process is necessary in order to appreciate fully Jesus' position over against the Old Testament. Outwardly Christ nowhere assumes a different relation to the Old Testament from that occupied by his contemporaries. The deepest reverence for the Scriptures amounting even to considering the very letter sound, he shared with the people of his day. He regarded those same men as the scribes of the sacred text and authors of the holy books which the rabbis considered such. He considered Moses as the author of the entire Pentateuch, David the author of the Psalms, Isaiah's book as consisting of sixty-six chapters, and Daniel as the writer of the book bearing his name. He considered the stories narrated in

these books as transpiring in the manner accepted by the scribes of his day, beginning with the account of the Creation, the Fall, the murder of Abel, down to the murder of Zechariah, from the beginning of Genesis to the close of Chronicles. For him the primitive fathers were real persons, the patriarchs really lived, and Jesus doubtlessly never entertained a doubt but that Balaam's ass really spoke. Whoever does not with him believe all this, (*i. e.*, breaks in any particular with the rabbinical literary criticism of Christ's day,) thereby refuses to accept the authority of Christ in outward matters.

But not only was Jesus in agreement with his times in such literary questions but he was influenced by the Jewish world of thoughts outwardly in a most decided way. It is not to be so understood that in questions that were indifferent from a scientific point of view he shared the erroneous opinions of the hour without further investigations, but that in questions pertaining to life and the philosophy of things (*Weltanschauung*) he broke with Jewish narrow-mindedness. In both respects he was a thorough child of his age. He considers the whole law with all its cultus commands as binding for all life and for all times. His saying that he who violates even one of the smallest ordinances is guilty of the whole, is practically regarded by him as applicable to the entire thought. Circumcision and fasts, sacrifices and Paschah, Sabbath and temple were often enough judged by Jesus from the standpoint of the law demanding for all of its parts, especially the ritual, the dignity of eternal authority. And even his own mission Christ interprets as pertaining only to the favored people of the Jews. Even his disciples are directed, down to his return, to preach the gospel only to the Jews. From the entire picture thus secured, it is apparent that Jesus' *outward* position over against the Old Testament has not for us authoritative character.

The inner relation of Jesus to the Old Testament presents an entirely different picture. Jesus has fulfilled the Old Testament. Every fulfilment in the nature of the case is a dissolution. And Jesus was clearly conscious of the fact that in principle his position dissolved the Old Testament. It is true that Jesus' person and teaching are rooted in the Old Testament peoples and the Old Testament religion. And yet he stands with his teachings in the most irreconcilable contrast to the Old Testament religion of his contemporaries. In three points particularly does this contrast of the New to the Old appear in the most pronounced shape, viz., in Jesus' doctrine of God; in his doctrine of the worship of God; in his doctrine of his own person.

Jesus teaches concerning God that he is a "spirit," and that he is perfect love. In teaching this he goes away beyond the Old Testament, even beyond the greatest of the prophets, who had indeed prepared the way for this doctrine, but had never been able to present it in its purity separated from its fleshly surroundings of carnal hopes. If God is a spirit, then it follows that the "Word of God" must be something spiritual, and can never be something in any way mechanical, *e. g.*, holy words, or holy letters, or "Sacred Scriptures." God's word dare no longer, as was done in the Old Testament, be materialized

and be dragged from the spiritual into the material and human ; and especially the theophanies reported in the Old Testament can in no way be brought into agreement with the word of Jesus, that none but the Son hath seen the Father—which words were spoken directly in reference to the Old Testament.

True worship of God according to Jesus' teaching consists solely in faith. The old ritualistic law has no more authority for him. Accordingly, man is also the lord of the Sabbath, because the Sabbath has been made for man. What a chasm between Jesus and the law ! And, again, what an advance on the part of Jesus over against the prophets ! True, these two know something of the true and real faith which makes up real worship of God ; but their confidence is in Jehovah the God of Israel. Jesus, on the other hand, bases his faith on that God who is the Father of all.

Concerning his own person Jesus teaches that he is not *that* Messiah who is described in the Old Testament prophecies. Yes, Christ is not the Messiah promised by the Old Testament ! The latter was to be a worldly ruler, Jesus Christ is a lord in the realm of spirits. Nor is this the fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions "in a different spirit or sense," but it is actually no realization of the Old Testament Messianic picture. Jesus regards himself as the realization of an entirely different picture, namely, that of the servant of God. His purpose it is to fulfil the missions attributed to this servant by the prophets of Israel, by which Israel is become the mediator of salvation to the Gentiles. Jesus declined to be regarded as the fulfilment of Messianic hopes ; before his eye he saw the vision of the servant of God. But he was to be the mediator not only between God and Israel ; for this every prophet was to be regarded himself as the mediator between God and the whole world.

What a difference between Christ's inner and external attitude toward the Old Testament. Can such a contrast be possible in one person ! The contrast (*Widerspruch*) actually exists. He who adheres to Jesus' inner position must be content to accept that in his external relation to the Old Testament, not a few erroneous views were entertained by him. In Jesus we find the same state of affairs that we do in any reformer. The new ideas press forward with determined vehemence, but the conclusions are not by himself drawn in every case.

This remarkable discussion has a history. It is the outcome of a controversy starting in opposition to the famous "Bonn Vacation Lectures," in which Meinhold presented the newer results of criticism to a company of those pastors. His position was attacked throughout the land, and his first reply was found in his brochure *Wider den Kleinglauben*, in which he tried to show that only a lack of faith could refuse an acceptance of the critical views. This is the positive exposition of his teachings, and, in many respects, representative. It is clear and transparent and needs no commentary. While it is impossible to agree with all of Meinhold's positions, notably with his view that Jesus taught that he was not the Old Testament Messiah, a careful reading will furnish an abundance of material for thought.

G. H. S.